

We claim:

1. A system for implementing HACCP process and control in an organization operating numerous restaurants, wherein each restaurant is managed by a manager and employs food service workers, wherein the organization employs a HACCP administrator tasked with establishing parameters reflecting the organization's HACCP goals, said system comprising:

means for entering various HACCP parameters into a database;

10 numerous data acquisition systems dispersed at the numerous restaurants, for use by food service workers, said data acquisition systems comprising PDAs;

means for communicating entered HACCP parameters to the PDAs via the internet; and

15 software installed on the PDAs for interactive use of the PDAs by the food service workers, said software providing operability to the PDA to accomplish the following functions:

20 receive data input from the food service worker regarding various measured or observed conditions relevant to the HACCP parameters; and

communicate the inputted data from the PDA via the internet to the database accessible to the HACCP administrator from a central location.

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2. The system of claim 1, further comprising;

means for limiting entry of HACCP parameters to the HACCP administrator; and

means for accepting input from the restaurant managers
5 regarding applicability of various HACCP parameters to activities specific to a particular restaurant.

3. The system of claim 1, further comprising;

means for limiting entry of HACCP parameters to the HACCP administrator; and

10 means for accepting input from the restaurant managers regarding applicability of various HACCP parameters specific to a particular restaurant and thereafter present parameters to food service workers within the particular restaurant with a customized collection of
15 HACCP parameters.

4. The system of claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein the software installed in the PDA provides the further functions of;

conditionally prompting the food service worker for additional information pursuant to multi-step HACCP
20 procedures;

conditionally prompting the food service worker for information regarding corrective actions if recorded data or observations are unacceptable; and

communicating the additional inputted data from the PDA to
25 the database.

5. The system of claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein each data acquisition system further comprises:

5 a data logger reader proximate the PDA, said data logger reader operable to acquire data from a plurality of data loggers;

one or more data loggers fixed at locations within each restaurant, said locations corresponding to locations at which HACCP data must be taken;

10 wherein the PDA is programmed to prompt the food service worker, in the completion of a HACCP checklist requiring observation of physical conditions at a location in the restaurant, to read the data logger at the location at which the observation is to be performed, and thereby confirm that the food service worker is observing data
15 relevant to the checklist, and, after receiving appropriate input from the data logger reader, accepting observation input in completion of the checklist.

6. The system of claim 1, 2 or 3, wherein each data acquisition system further comprises:

20 a temperature probe operably connected to the PDA for acquisition of temperature data;

a data logger reader proximate the temperature probe, said data logger reader operable to acquire data from a plurality of data loggers;

25 one or more data loggers fixed at locations within each restaurant, said locations corresponding to locations at which HACCP data must be taken;

wherein the PDA is programmed to prompt the food service worker, in the completion of a HACCP checklist, to read the data logger at the location at which the checklist is to be performed, and thereby confirm that the food service worker is acquiring temperature data relevant to the checklist, and, after receiving appropriate input from the data logger reader, accepting temperature input to the temperature probe in completion of the checklist.

7. The system of claim 6, wherein the temperature probe is characterized by an insertion portion adapted for insertion into food or other mass and a handle, and the data logger reader is fixed to the handle, spaced from the insertion portion.

8. The system of claim 1, 2, or 3 further comprising:

means for indicating exceptions to checklists and checklist items, including checklists not performed, checklist items not checked, and unacceptable measurements of HACCP parameters, to the HACCP administrator.

9. A method of implementing HACCP process and control in a franchised food service organization comprising a franchisor and a plurality of franchisees, said method comprising:

providing a system for implementing HACCP process and control in an organization operating numerous restaurants, wherein each restaurant is managed by a manager and employs food service workers, wherein the organization employs a HACCP administrator tasked with establishing parameters reflecting the organization's HACCP goals, said system comprising:

providing a database and means for entering various HACCP parameters into a database;

numerous data acquisition systems dispersed at the numerous restaurants, for use by food service workers, said data acquisition systems comprising PDAs;

means for communicating entered HACCP parameters to the PDAs; and

software installed on the PDAs for interactive use of the PDAs by the food service workers, said software providing operability to the PDA to accomplish the following functions:

receive data input from the food service worker regarding various measured or observed conditions relevant to the HACCP parameters; and

communicate the inputted data from the PDA to a database accessible to the HACCP administrator from a central location;

wherein;

the database is controlled by the franchisor; and

the data acquisition systems are purchased, controlled, and maintained by the franchisees.